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Gei //Khauan. The latter, whose founder was the eldest of the five brothers, are acknowledged by all the others to be the senior tribe among them. In spite of this claim to a common ancestry, however, the tribes have for a long time been independent of one another; although, according to Hahn, the chief of the *Gei //Khauan* received an annual tribute from the rest of the tribes up to as late as 1863.[1]

Each tribe has its acknowledged chief, *gao-aob*, and also an acknowledged claim to certain large permanent fountains or pools in river beds. Before the coming of the Orlams and of the white men the boundaries between the different tribes were not defined in any clear manner. Different waterholes or fountains in the country were always thought of as belonging to certain specific tribes, who used to wander about from fountain to fountain, seeking pasture for their cattle. Other people could use the water, too, but one tribe had a prior claim to it, established by habit, and had the right to expect that any other group intending to camp there for a long time would ask permission to do so.

The tribes do not seem to have ever been at all large. The number of people in each ranged apparently from several hundreds to a couple of thousand. It is difficult to obtain any trustworthy figures, owing to the great disruption that has taken place in the social organization of the people, but Palgrave's estimate, made at a time when conditions were less disturbed, may be taken as a useful guide to the relative size of the tribes in 1876. The Gei //Khauan then numbered approximately 2,500, the /Aunin 750, the //O Gein 800, //Khau /Goan 1,000, //Haboben 1,800, !Khara Gei Khoin 800, !Gami /Nun 2,000, Afrikaners 800, Witbooís 2,500, Bethanie Hottentots 2,000, Berseba Hottentots 700, and the Amraal Hottentots 600.[2] In 1923, however, of the still surviving Nama tribes the Gei //Khauan numbered only about 100 and the //Khau /Goan 200, while, on the other hand, the Berseba Hottentots, who had avoided all conflict with the Germans, were able to claim over 3,000 adherents.

The Clan

Each tribe was composed of a number of patrilineal clans (*/khau /aasi*, lit. things within the tribe), i.e. groups of people claiming to be related in the male line.[3] One of these clans claimed seniority, and

[1] *Tsaob-//Goam*, 37.
[2] W. C. Palgrave, *Report of . . . Mission to Damaraland and Great Namaqualand in 1876*, p. 24, quoted by Hoernlé, *op. cit.*, 7.
[3] Hoernlé, *op. cit.*, 9–16; Olpp, *op. cit.*, 23; Kohler, *op. cit.*, 332–3.

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the chieftainship of the whole tribe was hereditary in this senior clan, and inherited in the male line from father to son. In the case of the //Khau /Goan (Swartbooi) tribe the names of ten clans have been preserved, in the case of the Gei //Khauan (Rooi Natie) of fifteen, and in that of the /Hobesen (Witbooie) of seven. It appears from the clan names of the Gei //Khauan that there must formerly have been several more clans in this tribe, so that on the whole the size of a clan cannot have been considerable. No actual figures are available, however.

Each clan named itself eponymously from its first known ancestor, or from the ancestor under whom it first claimed independence. In some cases tribal traditions have been preserved in which the various clans in the tribe are shown to have been related to one another in the past. The legend of the Swartbooie, for instance, is that they separated from the Rooi Natie under the leadership of the */Gaeis* family, and that the three brothers of this family became the ancestors of the three chief clans of the tribe—the */Gari Gein* or big */Gaeis*, the */Gari /Naguman* or "next" */Gaeis*, and the */Gari /Karis* or little */Gaeis*, these names being those of the three brothers respectively.[1] When the tribe was first formed the chieftainship was vested in the */Gari Gein* clan, but it has now passed to the second clan, the */Gari /Naguman*, as the senior clan has become almost extinct, being represented to-day by only two or three people. Two of the other clans in this tribe are formed by people who were incorporated from the //O Gein tribe after the latter had broken up; and a similar instance where members of a different tribe were absorbed is found in the case of the /Aunin living at Walvis Bay, who completely defeated another Nama people known as the */Namaxin* and incorporated its remnant into their own clans. It would appear, therefore, that the different clans now found in a tribe are by no means always related, and even where they do claim a common descent it is no longer possible to trace this relationship genealogically.

The various family groups which go together to form a clan are also called */kau /nani*. These family groups to-day have Dutch, or, at any rate, European surnames. Some of the clans have only one

[1] It is the Hottentot custom for all the sons of a woman to be called by her "great name" (*gei khoi /oe*), while all the daughters are similarly called by the *gei khoi /oe* of their father. Hence all the sons of a woman named */Gaeis* will be called */Gaeiti*, and all the daughters of a man named //*Khauab* will be called //*Khause*. They are distinguished from one another by the use of special *adjectives*, the eldest son being called the big one, *gaiti*, hence */Gari gaiti*, the second the next one, */naguaxab*, hence */Gari /naguaxab*, the third the dark one, *//aob*, or the light one, */haiti*, or the tall one, *gaoab*, and so on, while the youngest will be called the young one, */aoti*, or the little one, */kaeti*, hence */Gari /kaeti*. The same distinctions are made in the case of the daughters.

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family surname. That of the /Gori /Nagoreun, for example, is Swartbooi, and that of the /Naisi Ein, another of the Swartbooi clans, is Bruiker. Other clans have several of these surnames, e.g. those of the /Garoaib clan of the same tribe are Swartbooi, Gertze, Richter, and Van der Bijl, and little genealogical connection can now be traced between the different family groups bearing these names. Members of the same clan, however, all considered themselves blood relatives, and were bound together by various common rules and observances. Marriage within the clan was strongly forbidden, so that a man had to seek his wife in another clan. The children belonged to the clan of their father. Apart from thus restricting marriage and regulating descent, and with it inheritance and succession, the clan seems to have functioned mainly as a political unit. There is no record of any ceremonial observances and taboos specially connected with the clan organization, nor was there anything in the nature of totemism among the Hottentots. The members of a clan all tended to live together, and membership of a clan guaranteed a person a strong measure of protection. He could always count on the support of his fellow-clansmen, especially in the case of blood feud. Early last century the vendetta system was still in force among the Naman, even between clans of the same tribe, and the chief of the tribe was unable to prevent two clans from carrying out blood vengeance on each other, or to force them to accept compensation.

The clan was thus the strongest unit ever attained by the Naman. Time and again a powerful clan would go off on its own, asserting its independence of the others, and clan loyalty was always stronger than tribal loyalty. The chief of the tribe was little more than *primus inter pares*. He was acknowledged to be the head of the senior clan, and if a man of fine character was accorded a great deal of respect; but the heads of the other clans acted as his council, and he could not do much without their co-operation. The whole conduct of affairs in the tribe was—and still is—the concern of the older men.

The clan structure of the Swartboois as analysed by Mrs. Hoernlé shows the whole mechanism by which clans and tribes were formed among the Naman. A large and flourishing family would very often have its own favourite pasturing grounds, and be so large as to exclude members of other families or clans. In course of time they would become sufficient unto themselves, and the headman begin to play the part of a chief. They would arrange migrations to suit themselves independently of the other members of the tribe, and ultimately be

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acknowledged as independent. As the families increased descendants of different brothers would group themselves more closely and form clans and even sub-clans. In this way a new tribe would gradually develop from a clan or part of a clan of the parent tribe.

Encampments and Dwellings

Small as the tribes were, their members were yet too numerous to remain together for long at any one spot. As a rule they were scattered over the country in smaller groups, each group consisting of a clan of the tribe, or even of some part of a clan. The older members of the clan, however, would always stay on at the headquarters of the tribal chief; and in this encampment the relative position of the different clans was strictly regulated by custom.

In the old days the main tribal encampment was in the form of a great circle.[1] The whole was enclosed with a great fence of thorn, in which were two gateways, one to the north, the other to the south. Within this fence and round the circumference were the huts of the people, each hut facing inwards to the centre. The huts of the chief and the members of his clan stood in the western portion of the circle, facing east, and on either side of them were ranged in fixed order the huts of the other clans, the members of each clan living close together. The great open space in the centre served as a fold for the stock at night. Special enclosures were made for the calves and the lambs, but there were no enclosures for the cattle and sheep, which just lay in front of their owner's hut till driven out to pasture in the morning.

The old camping order of the clans has long since been given up, but the order of camping of the families within the clan is still maintained in many instances. In any settlement of Hottentots may be found the huts of a number of men called by the same name and belonging to the same family group. These huts are ranged in order of seniority. The oldest brother with his wife, children, and dependents dwells furthest to the right, the youngest brother furthest to the left, as one stands, facing outwards, at the doorway of any hut. Near each of the brothers are grouped his immediate dependents, the married sons to the right, the oldest furthest to the right, the youngest nearest to the hut of the father, while on the left is any married daughter not yet removed to her husband's people and any widowed sister come home to live with him. Other dependents of various kinds are

[1] Hoernlé, *op. cit.*, 11–17, *passim*. For the Cape Hottentots, cf. Kolb, *Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung*, 109 *and passim*; Peacock, *Hingabenen Zuidafrika's*, 316 *sq.*; Sparrman, *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, i, 193–9.

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643 555 [229] revenue. It appears, however, from the report of an expedition made to the Inqua in 1689 under the leadership of Ensign Schrijver, that in this tribe at least there was a regulation that anyone killing game in the chase might not eat of it until he had made a present to the chief. In ignorance of this custom one of Schrijver's party shot a bird and cooked it, whereupon the chief expressed displeasure and refused to carry on any more barter with the Dutch travellers. As soon as Schrijver was made aware of the circumstance and of the tribal usage, he sent the chief a present of beads, which was received as ample atonement for the mistake.[1] There is no other record of any similar prerogative of the chief's, so that one cannot say whether the usage just described existed in the other Cape Hottentot tribes as well. Kolb, as we have noted, says that no tribute at all was paid to the chief: he lived, like any ordinary tribesman, upon the milk of his cattle, and there is nothing to indicate that he was necessarily more wealthy than anybody else. He might be accorded a good deal of respect, but there is no mention of any special etiquette or ceremonial observed towards him.

642 ● 648 649 622 Kolb's description, inadequate though it is from many points of view, shows clearly that among the Cape Hottentots the local groups were to a large extent autonomous, although the important affairs of the tribe as a whole were regulated by their headmen in council. Some light is thrown upon this by Mrs. Hoernlé's analysis of the social organization of the Naman. It will be remembered from this that every Hottentot tribe as a rule was scattered over the country in smaller groups, each group consisting of a clan or of some part of a clan. The chief of the tribe was the head of the senior clan, and if a man of fine character could command a good deal of respect; but the heads of the other clans acted as his council, and he could not do much without their co-operation. The bonds holding together the clans to form a tribe were never very strong, and often enough a powerful clan would assert its independence of the others, and in time become recognized as a separate tribe, with its own headman as chief. In all probability the "captains" referred to by Kolb were such headmen of clans of the tribe, and, as we shall see later, in actual fact the different local divisions of the Cape Hottentot tribes were only loosely connected together, and would often act independently of one another, at times even against one another. The Dutch practice of treating these headmen or "captains" as more or less

[1] Quoted in Godée-Molsbergen, *Reizen in de Kaap*, iii, 111.

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autonomous petty rulers naturally tended to accentuate the feeling of independence. At the same time it also gave the "captain" a more prominent position as an individual than he really seems to have occupied in the original conditions of native life.

As Kolb's description also brings out, the whole conduct of public affairs was the concern of the adult men generally, and, as appears from the descriptions of other writers, of the older men in particular. The chief, by virtue of his hereditary status, was the recognized head of the community, but his authority was circumscribed and precarious, and he could not act without consulting his council. It seems indeed, that in most cases he must be looked upon as the political representative rather than as the actual ruler of the tribe. There is nothing in the literature to indicate that he had any other special functions. Neither Kolb nor any other writer records any important religious or magical ceremonies which the chief had to perform on behalf of the tribe, any definite prohibitions or obligations regulating the relations between him and his subjects, or any ritual performances or taboos to which he was specially subjected. The sacred character often associated with the chieftainship in primitive society does not appear to have existed among the Hottentots.

The political organization of the Namas was in all probability originally the same as that of their southern relatives. But by the beginning of the nineteenth century, from which time onwards most of the relevant literature dates, the old form of government among the Orlams was being slowly altered into a crude modification of the system developed by the Dutch at the Cape. The influence of these incoming groups, and to some extent also of the missionaries, gradually affected the form of political institutions in the other Nama tribes as well. The system of tribal control found among them within recent years, although based upon the old native system, can therefore by no means be regarded as representing that system in its original form. It is nevertheless of considerable interest as illustrating the grafting of European elements upon Hottentot organization, and since it is in any case an integral part of the tribal life it cannot be ignored. The information bearing upon it is also more detailed and accurate than that relating to the Cape Hottentots, which it serves to supplement in several respects.[1]

[1] The principal sources are: Schinz, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, 222–31; von François, *Nama und Damara*, 218–21; Kohler, "Das Recht der Hottentotten," 317–31; *Report on the Natives of S.W.A.*, 72–4, 76 and *passim*; cf. also Tindall, *Grass Nomenclature*, 33–4; Olpp, *Angra Pequena*, 24; Wandres, "Die Khoi-Khoin," 320–4; Schinz, *Namaland und Kalahari*, 321; Vedder, "The Nama," 140.